“The Christian Value of Praise”

November 18, 2018

Psalm 25:1-10

Please find with me the twenty-fifth Psalm.

Now, with your Bible open in front of you, let me begin today with why it’s important for you and I to read God’s Word daily. Here’s why. Romans 10:13 *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (14) How then shall they call on him in whom they have not* ***believed****? And how shall they* ***believe*** *in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?*

*(15) And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! (16) But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith (Isaiah 53:1), Lord, who hath* ***believed*** *our report? (17) So then* ***faith*** *cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*

Faith is believing. And when you read your Bible daily, or when you hear it, or when you study it, as you learn it, you gain faith because faith comes through the Scriptures. Your faith barometer rises. You learn daily how to live by faith. And that implies that to neglect God’s Word is to reduce and even eliminate faith.

So, let’s read this twenty-fifth Psalm and, as you read it, try to be more conscious of exercising faith. And notice as I read, that this is a prayer. Psalm 25:1 *“Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. (2) O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me. (3) Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause. (4) Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths.*

*(5) Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day. (6) Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses; for they have been ever of old. (7) Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord.*

*(8) Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. (9) The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way. (10) All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.*

*(11) For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great. (12) What man is he that feareth the Lord? Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. (13) His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth. (14) The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.”*

I’ve titled today’s message “The Christian Value of Praise.” Shall we pray?

“I cannot tell you anything that, in a few minutes, will tell you how to be rich. But I can tell you how to *feel* rich, which is far better, let me tell you firsthand, than being rich. Be grateful…It’s the only reliable get-rich quick scheme” (Ben Stein).

Does anyone here today know why the Pilgrims set aside a Day of Thanksgiving in their second year in the new world?

Think back to the first Thanksgiving here in America. Had the LORD not just delivered them from something quite serious? Imagine this; 106 people set sail on the Mayflower on September 6, 1620. It took 65 days of ocean travel in a harsh Atlantic Ocean to arrive at the New World. They made shore on November 10, 1620. Upon arrival, they had to build shelters, homes, out buildings and furniture. They had to hunt and forage for food. They had to fish the rivers and to cook and to eat. They also had to stay warm. And did you know that of the 106 people that arrived at Plymouth Rock, 30 were children; two of them were born on the trip. And of the 106 who came to the New World, 56 died that first winter.

Now with all that suffering, what did these Pilgrims do? The ones that survived reflected on their own survival, contemplated the deliverance of their families, wondered at God’s bountiful provision. And all these things became their reason to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the LORD. He had been their provision, their protection and their purpose. And after that extremely difficult first year, the Pilgrims, our forefathers, set aside one day to offer praise to their Heavenly Father. We celebrate their celebration every year as the holiday of “Thanksgiving.”

So, today, Christian values; one Christian value in particular; praise; not just *what* it is or *when* we should do it; but *how*. Your values, as you know, determine why you do what you do. So, why offer praise?

Would you look with me for a reason to praise from this twenty-fifth psalm? Look with me at the words of David.

Verses 1-3 – a request that his enemies not triumph over him.

Verses 4-5 – a request that the LORD lead him and teach him.

Verses 6-7 – a request for the LORD to remember to show him kindness and love while at the same time not remembering his past sins.

None of these prayer requests are a reason to praise. They are requests to God. But what do you find in verse eight? Psalm 25:8 *“Good and upright is the Lord: …”*

What does David know about the LORD that you and I also know well? That God is two things among many other things. He is Good. And He is Upright. And what does that tell you about God? Doesn’t it say that God is Good and that God is Upright? And if God is good and upright, doesn’t that mean that everything He *does* is both good and upright?

God is Good and He is Upright. Every single thing that God does is good and it’s right.

So, why do you offer praise to the LORD?

First, it’s because He’s Good. You don’t offer praise just because everything is great in your life. Most of us, most of the time would say that things aren’t as good as we’d like them to be. The simple fact is this. Even when you don’t like the way things are in your life, God continues to be Good and Upright. It’s what He is. It’s Who He is.

Here’s I Chronicles 16:34 *“O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever.”*

Psalm 100:5 *“The LORD is good…”*

How many days this week did things go as you planned? How many setbacks and frustrations did you experience? Who here likes all the things in their lives? Who here would like things to be different than they are?

By the way, this is a standard medical response when you are facing a serious medical problem. Your doctor might say to you “I wish things were different, but …”

Maybe you wish things weren’t so difficult. Maybe you wish things would work out better for you. Maybe you would like a quote “better life” than you presently have.

Let me remind you that right now is the time for you to praise the LORD. Romans 8:28 is true when things go well and when things don’t go well. Romans 8:28 *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”*

What if everything in your life right now was working together for your good by a Creator/Father/God Who is able to work everything in your life together as one unit into a good thing? What if everything in your life right now was working together for your good? Would you praise the LORD?

Fortunately for you and me, God *doesn’t* give us the entire picture. Here’s what the Bible teaches. I Corinthians 13:12 *“For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part…”*

What if you wore glasses that didn’t work well for you and what if it was difficult for you to see clearly? I have a friend with retinitis pigmentosa. He sees shadows, but nothing is distinct. And I recently read a story about a mother who hikes with her family. But she also has retinitis pigmentosa. She only sees shadows. Nothing is distinct. Yet, she, her husband, and her two children spend as much time as possible on hiking trails.

Spiritually speaking, the LORD has *put* you in a world where you see through a glass darkly and the only way to walk in this world is by the sight and light of His Word.

This word “darkly” here means “obscurity.” It means you see things, but you don’t see them correctly. It means many, if not, most things in your life are difficult to understand.

So, since God is Good and Upright and since He has set you down in a world where you simply *can’t* see things as clearly as you’d like, then that’s why you praise. You don’t praise just because everything is going your way. For some of us, we’d never praise if that was the case.

He’s commanded you to *“give thanks in everything.”*

Fanny Crosby was born in Putnam County, New York with two good eyes. Yet, when she was just six weeks old, a supposed doctor, a quack, made a mistake and put a very hot mustard plaster onto her eyes that caused her complete blindness, one hundred per cent blindness, blackness all day and all night.

But did you know that her grandmother constantly read her the Bible? She read it her so much that Fanny, as a child, came memorize five chapters a week, including Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and many of the Psalms. At by the time she was twenty-three, Fanny Crosby addressed the U.S. Congress on the topic of blindness. And was a friend to both U.S. President John Tyler and her special friend President Grover Cleveland. She played the harp. She sang. She played the piano. She played the guitar.

And Fanny Crosby wrote 9,000 hymns for Christians to sing praise to God. And inside many of those hymns she pines for the day when quote “faith shall become sight.” Have you ever sung “Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine”? How about “Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross”? And how about “To God Be The Glory, Great Things He Has Done”?

Here’s verse two of “Blessed Assurance.”

2. Perfect submission, perfect delight,
**Visions of rapture now burst on my sight**;
Angels descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

3. Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blest;
**Watching** and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

Fanny Crosby was filled with lots of spiritual light. Yet, she wasn’t seeing like you and me, through a glass darkly. She wasn’t seeing at all.

Why is it that you offer praise to the LORD?

First, it’s because He’s Good and Upright. Even when you don’t like the way things are in your life, God continues to be Good and Upright.

Second, it’s because it’s better to praise than to complain.

Here’s a word from the Apostle Peter that has been a help to me on the matter of complaining. I Peter 4:12 *“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: …”*

God says this through Peter. It’s not strange when you experience a fiery trial in your life. And, for those of you who are in the midst of some fiery trial, listen to what the Spirit says to you. I Peter 4:13*“But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”*

Have you noticed what you always do when you are faced with fire; even a fiery trial? You run. You do not want to be burned by that fire. Yet, the LORD says, *“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: …”*

Did you know that right now there are seventeen forest fires burning in California and only two of them are contained?

You ask, “Why?” And the answer is not so simple. Some were started by people; some by outdated electric lines; and some by nature when lightning strikes a dry section of the woods. And over fifty people have died in these fires in recent weeks. But, in every single case, the natural instinct is to flee; to get away from the fire.

So, yes, it’s normal for you and me to want to get out from the fiery trial God has allowed to come our way. But, along with a prayer for deliverance, do what Peter commands. I Peter 4:13*“But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”*

And Paul supplies you with this reminder. Philippians 2:14 *“Do all things without murmurings and disputings.”*

I Thessalonians 5:18 *“In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”*

I don’t know what is going on in your life right now. But, I know this. You can either wallow in self-pity or even allow yourself to get deeply discouraged. Or you can do what the Bible tells you to do. Praise the LORD.

I want to tell you another true story. Here it is. I Samuel 30:1 *“And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; (2) And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way.*

*(3) So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. (4) Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.*

*(5) And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. (6) And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters:* ***but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God****.”*

Would anyone here agree with me that David had a significant setback in his life that week? Well, what David did is why David, though dead, is still speaking. He, like you and me, saw through a glass darkly. But he strengthened Himself not in himself, but in his LORD.

Why is it that you offer praise to the LORD?

First, it’s because He’s Good and Upright.

Second, it’s because it’s better to praise than to complain. God continues to be Good and Upright.

Now you might be here today and you aren’t saved. You are still in the darkness of your sin. You are still unforgiven and lost and on your way to Hell. You are still apart from Christ. So, what I’m speaking about here today might be making no sense whatsoever to you.

Today, though, if you repent and receive Christ as your personal LORD and Savior, you will find, not only that God will forgive you of all your sins; but that He will become your Heavenly Father and you will be able to trust Him every day with all the things He allows to come your way.

Here’s the sinner’s prayer.

*“Father, I realize I am a sinner. I believe that Jesus died in my place on the cross. I repent of my sins. I want to be completely forgiven today. I am trusting you right now to save me. Thank you. Amen”*

Why exercise the Christian value of praise?

First, it’s because He’s Good and Upright.

Second, it’s because it’s better to praise than to complain.

Third, it’s because praise comes before understanding.

Folks, understanding why the LORD allows what He does is one of the deepest burdens of every human heart. *“I can’t see the meaning of this”* you say.

But, what is happening in heaven at this very moment. The entire family of God in heaven is singing praise and expressing thanksgiving to the LORD. Why? Because they see it. They understand it. They now realize that God had a specific purpose in allowing what He did while they were on the earth.

And as they recall each of those things that the LORD allows, they now say to themselves *“Now, I see. Now I understand.” I wish that I had simply trusted you LORD at that time in my life. And I wish now that I had obeyed you and praised your Name even though I didn’t understand it at the time.”*

You see, in Heaven, all of this life, your life, will be cleared up. So, praise, according to the Bible, comes before understanding.

Watchman Nee puts it like this. *“We believe that praises will abound in heaven because there will be full knowledge in heaven. The fuller the knowledge, the fuller the praise. Everything will be clear when we go before the Lord on that day. The things that are unclear to us today will be clear to us on that day.*

*On that day we will see the Lord’s excellent will in every step of the Spirit’s discipline. Had there been no discipline of the Spirit, we cannot imagine how much we would have fallen! If some of our footsteps had not been stopped by the Holy Spirit, we cannot imagine how pitiful our fall would have been!*

*Many things, thousands and even millions of things which we do not see today, will become clear to us on that day. When we see everything on that day, we will bow our head and praise Him, saying, “Lord, You were never wrong.”*

*Every step of the Spirit’s discipline is God’s work in us. Had we not become sick that one time, what would have become of us? Had we not failed that one time, what would have become of us?*

*What we faced may have been a problem, but through facing that problem we may have avoided greater problems. What we encountered may have been a misfortune, but through that encounter we may have avoided greater misfortunes. On that day we will see why the Lord allowed all these things to happen to us.”* [Found on [www.ministrybooks.org](http://www.ministrybooks.org) “Praising Before Understanding” by Watchman Nee].

Folks, praise comes before understanding.

So, what to do tomorrow morning in light of these passages from the Bible.

What are your first thoughts as you wake up? Begin your day like the following thoughts.

One, take a few minutes to reflect on God, the Father, God, the Son, and God, the Holy Spirit. Who is God? What do you understand Him to be?

Two, take a few minutes to reflect on the world. What do you think about the world? What do you understand about the world?

And three, take a few minutes to reflect on your place in this world. What are you? Who is benefiting by your being in this world? What contributions are you making to those around you?

And four, memorize and review Psalm 150.

Psalm 150:1 *“Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. (2) Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. (3) Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp.*

*(4) Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. (5) Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. (6) Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.”*

Now, if you’re here today and you are a sinner without a Savior, don’t put off the offer of eternal life from Jesus Christ to you. He and He alone has met all the requirements of a Perfect Sacrifice by paying the entire payment for your sin. He died in your place. And now it’s your move, so-to-speak. Will you repent of your sin and receive Jesus Christ, the Savior as your LORD and Savior? Go to Him right now and ask for His mercy. He will show you mercy and He will save you. Pastor Charles Spurgeon said it like this. “He can save you because He didn’t save Himself.”

Ask the LORD to enable you to walk today with His Strength as you praise Him for His mighty Person and His mighty works.

Hymn # 21 “O For A Thousand Tongues To Sing”